



TAKING THE BENCH

A No Fee Online Course for New General Jurisdiction Judges

This self-study course is designed for General Jurisdiction judges who have recently been elected/appointed prior to taking the bench. However, it should also be of interest and valuable to judges who recently began their judicial career.

The course will take approximately 7 to 9 hours to complete. Judges may sign up at any time during the week. Once they have signed up, they will have five weeks to complete the course.

Welcome to the Course provides introductory information about the course. It also includes a short video from one of the developers.

Learning Modules: After reviewing the materials in each of the four modules and taking the accompanying self-tests, judges should be able to:

MODULE ONE: *Transition from Bar to Bench*

(1) define “principled decision making”; (2) differentiate between those community, political, business and financial activities that they are allowed to attend and those they are not; (3) summarize their responsibilities for winding up a law practice (if relevant); (4) describe those cases in which they must disqualify themselves or otherwise note on the record the associations they had with previous clients or organizations; (5) recite the importance of a fair and impartial court system and the rationale behind judicial independence; (6) identify the types of mental health issues personally faced by judges, new and experienced, and describe potential solutions; (7) state the impact that isolation has on some judges and describe possible options for alleviating it; and (8) define the positive aspects of being a judge.

MODULE TWO: *In the Courtroom*

(1) describe their contempt powers with an understanding that contempt is only to be used as a last resort; (2) define the elements for making a successful record for appellate purposes; (3) outline ways to avoid wasting time at trial; (4) identify best practices for providing access to self-represented litigants; (5) explain the importance of “procedural fairness”; and (6) summarize the role of judicial discretion and ways it can be exercised appropriately.

MODULE THREE: *Behind the Scenes*

(1) define more clearly the judge’s appropriate role in encouraging settlements; (2) describe the judge’s role in caseload management; (3) determine whether judges in your jurisdiction have a role in employment issues; (4) identify the elements of effective judicial opinion writing; (5) summarize the necessary components for an effective court interpreter program; and (6) state the criteria that judges should consider in sentencing.

MODULE FOUR: *The Judge, the Court, the Community*

(1) define when judges may speak publicly about the justice system without jeopardizing fairness in cases before them; (2) describe methods for dealing with the media with the ultimate goal of educating the public about the courts; (3) identify ways to appropriately respond to criticism; and (4) summarize methods for ensuring the safety of themselves and their families.

Help/Resources provides contact information in the event that the participant has difficulty navigating the site.

Acknowledgments contains the names and photos of the curriculum developers and the course architects.

To enroll in the course, fill out the registration form on the back of this flyer. Upon completion, a certificate and congratulatory gifts will be sent to the participant.

If judges have any questions, they may contact the registrar’s office at (800) 255-8343.

The NJC truly appreciates the support of the State Justice Institute and the Pillars of Justice. Without that funding, this project would not have been possible.



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TAKING THE BENCH REGISTRATION FORM

The National Judicial College

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(800) 25-JUDGE (800-255-8343) | (775) 784-6747 | www.judges.org

Please **TYPE** or **PRINT CLEARLY** in black ink and complete all requested information

ENROLL BY EMAIL
register@judges.org

ENROLL BY FAX
775-784-1269
(no need to mail original)

_____ [] F [] M

First Name

Middle Initial

Last Name

Name of Court to which elected/appointed _____

Current Mailing Address (Required) _____

City _____ State/County/Tribe _____

Zip _____

Office Phone (_____) _____ Ext. _____ Fax (_____) _____ Home (_____) _____

Email address _____

Type of Jurisdiction: [] General

Population your court serves: [] 0-50,000 [] 50,000-250,000 [] 250,000-500,000 [] 500,000 plus

Law Degree: [] Yes [] No Other Degrees: [] Yes [] No (please specify) _____

☐ **PLEASE ENROLL ME IN: TAKING THE BENCH: A No-Fee Online Course for Newly Elected/Appointed General Jurisdiction Judges**

If you know what your court contact information will be when you take the bench, please provide (or submit as soon as you know it).

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Email _____



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Taking the Bench

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